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Suwannee Democrat

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The special mid-winter edition of the Fort Myers Press which has just reached us is thoroughly creditable in all respects. It is in magazine form, handsomely illustrated, and full of good matter showing the resources and advantages of Fort Myers and Lee county.

The Florida Press Association met in annual session in St. Augustine this week, and with Editors Hetherington and Appleyard on deck and with a fair turnout of the rank and file, the occasion was, of course, a success. We were there in spirit, but the imperious claims of duty held our gross material clay here in Live Oak.

Some newspapers insist that the Coopers who killed Carmack and got twenty years each, will never be punished, but will finally "beat the case." But that is not the way for newspapers to talk, for the cumulative effect of opinions like that is to create the wrong kind of public sentiment, the kind that anticipates and predicts the weakness of law, and thus helps bring about the very result it would avoid. Constant insistence on the enforcement of law, without any qualifying predictions that it won't be enforced, is the right policy for all people and all papers.

St. Augustine celebrated the 397th anniversary of the arrival of Ponce de Leon on that spot with elaborate and beautiful ceremonies this week, and the quaint old city was thronged with visitors to witness the impressive pageants. St. Augustine is up-to-date as well as antique, and she is one of the show towns of Florida of which we are all proud. "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale" the unflinching charm of her Ponce de Leon carnival. If old Ponce could resurrect his hallowed corporosity and see how gorgeously his memory is honored in that old town on these anniversary days, he would probably fall dead again under the shock of the surprise and joy.

We note that the Pensacola News, the Live Oak Democrat and the Gainesville Sun have been discussing the presidency of the State university and intimate that Dr. Sledd is not the man suited for that important position.—Palmetto News

You didn't see any such intimation in the Democrat. There was not a line of criticism of Dr. Sledd in anything we said, for we knew nothing to his discredit or disparagement, and not even did we hint that he was not the right man in the right place. In what the Democrat said it confined itself to an expression of opinion as to what kind of man should be president of the university in order to promote its success.

The indications are growing that the present State pension law will come in for some very pungent criticism during the next session of the legislature, and it is not improbable that it may be materially changed. That there is reason for such change has been clearly pointed out, but that law is "loaded," and it will take a legislator of almost heroic mould to monkey with it in a hostile spirit. It will be universally conceded that the man who earned a pension by actual service as a soldier during the war, and who really needs it now for the support of himself and family, if he has a family, should get a pension from the State; but why the people should be taxed to give pensions to those who cannot meet these two conditions is a proposition by no means so clear. There are plenty of stories afloat of men on the State pension rolls who saw no real service as soldiers during the war and are too well fixed to need the assistance of the State, and if the pension law shall be so changed as to exclude this class there will doubtless be no protest from the people who "pay the freight." And to cut off this element might be to make it possible to increase the pittance now paid to the really deserving veterans without adding to the burdens of the taxpayers.

THE LEADING ISSUE.

The legislature convenes next week, and the indications point to one of the most important sessions held in many years. A number of large questions, outside the usual class, will come up for consideration, but beyond doubt the issue in which the widest and deepest interest is felt is that of the submission of a prohibition amendment to the constitution.

The prohibition people have stated confidently, and their statement has been widely published, that the necessary three-fifths of the members-elect are pledged in writing to vote for the submission of an amendment, but the antis deny with apparently equal confidence that pledges to that extent have been given. The liquor people will undoubtedly be in force at Tallahassee and do their utmost to prevent the passage of a resolution submitting the amendment, but experience in the South has shown that when the decisive fight on this question comes, so great is the power of public sentiment that the saloon crowd generally goes down in prompt defeat and its boasted power makes a very poor showing of strength. Whether this will be the case at Tallahassee remains to be seen.

Prominent in the fight for prohibition will be Senator McMullen, from the Tampa district, and the following from the Tampa Tribune of Tuesday, concerning his attitude will be of interest, although the reporter probably got him down wrong when he speaks of a "prohibition bill" passing the legislature, as he doubtless meant a joint resolution providing for the submission to the people of a prohibition amendment:

"That a prohibition bill is certain to be introduced into the State legislature at its approaching meeting in Tallahassee, with strong probability of passing both house and senate, was the statement made yesterday afternoon by Don C. McMullen, senator from this district. Mr. McMullen confessed that he had no idea who will introduce the bill and spoke as if there is a likelihood of several persons trying for the honor. He declared that he will not introduce the bill himself, but that he will introduce such a bill himself if he found out that no one else will do so. When the prohibition bill is introduced, Mr. McMullen declared that he will make a warm fight for it, as he was elected on a prohibition platform against Robert McNamee, running on a local option platform. When the amendment will take effect depends on the provisions of the act of the legislature, but the consensus of opinion seems to be that it will be made to take effect January 1, 1911, shortly after it is submitted to the people at the general election of 1910. It is believed that Jan. 1, 1911, as the date for the amendment to go into effect, is agreeable to everyone interested in it. There is believed to be no doubt that the amendment will be carried when it is presented to the people."

The "Short Talks" man on the Times-Union has long been a pleasant and highly-respected mystery, as to his personality, with a large majority of the brethren of the State press. His calm, clear, judicial style and rare faculty for getting at the meat of a subject and putting it in admirably condensed form before the reader; his quiet humor and amiable satire, sparingly indulged; and, above all, his fine, philosophic spirit, with no alloy of passion or prejudice, or the small resentments that mar the work of too many press writers, make this unknown of the Times-Union distinctly a favorite with the readers of that paper. But he has been unmasked at last, as witness the following from the Ocala Star:

"Mr. Edgar is the 'Short Talks' editor of the Jacksonville Times-Union, and through his innate modesty there are but few who have met him, and few who ever knew his name, always referring to him as the 'Short Talks Man.' His column is the first to be scanned by the editors, and no other writer on the Times-Union has his matter so widely copied. Mr. Edgar is loved by the 'press gang' for his uniform courtesy and kindness in dealing with the State press and the matters which concern them. He inspires, encourages, and is always helpful—and is yet to say the first unkind word about any newspaper in the State, or any city, village or hamlet which that paper serves."

The Leesburg Commercial makes the erroneous statement that the Democrat, in connection with the Pensacola News and the Gainesville Sun, "has advocated a change in the presidency of the State university." Both the other papers mentioned have done so, but the Democrat entered the discussion merely to ask what was the objec-

tion to Dr. Sledd, and said nothing in criticism of him. The Commercial thinks very highly of Dr. Sledd and concludes a strong article on the subject of his presidency as follows:

"The critics of the university do not bring any charges against Dr. Sledd as a man, a scholar or an educator; they simply assert that the university is not a success in point of numbers. They seem to have entirely overlooked the conditions which work against it. . . . Dr. Sledd, of the university, and Dr. Murphree, of the Female College, are both good men. They are both scholars, practical educators and admirable gentlemen. Each is doing a good work in his respective place. The press of the State will make a mistake if it measures the value of Dr. Sledd by the attendance alone in his institution. We must look to the conditions which affect that attendance. We are reliably informed that the Board of Control is standing by Dr. Sledd in this attack upon him. We hope it will continue to do so."

The Florida Press

Our friends who are so urgent in advocating State uniformity on the ground of economy should adopt the plan of Hernando county, "free books." For seventeen years this county has operated the free book system to the entire satisfaction of the people.—Brooksville Argus.

The Extent of Maj. Butler's Pile.

The Suwannee Democrat accuses us of being in the capitalist class on account of a recent purchase of lots from Capt. Hawkins. Upon reading the item we immediately dove down into our pocketbook and found 30 cents—the extent of our pile. The fact of the matter is, one does not have to be a capitalist to acquire a home in Inverness or any part of Citrus county.—Inverness Chronicle.

Wailes Claim Is Just.

We see the Wailes claim is to come up again before the legislature for settlement. We deem this not only a just claim but a debt of honor and we trust the members of the legislature will so look upon it. The state has received its money from the general government and we believe had it not been for the labors of Col. Wailes the state never would have received the same. Let the legislature be honest and just. Ocala Star.

A Fight to a Finish.

Columbia county is all stirred up over a "wet and dry" election that is to be held in that county in the latter part of April. The liquor people have secured the requisite number of signers to their petition and are assured an election, but the temperance people are holding mass meetings and organizing to fight the issue to a finish. It's going to be an expensive effort to re-establish those hotbeds of vice and depravity in Columbia county.—DeLand Record.

Two Inverness Bachelors.

A rather comical incident occurred to two old bachelor friends of ours at an early hour Thursday morning during the raging of the storm. When it was at its height, the wind blowing a terrible gale and surging to and fro, the vivid lightning accompanied by loud peals of thunder, which was terrific, the two old bachelors were terribly frightened. One was holding the door while the other was praying. Finally the one at the door said to his partner: "Now you come and hold the door and let me pray awhile." Thus it is, our conscience makes cowards of us all.—Inverness Chronicle.

Economic Side of Murder.

It would be interesting to know what expense the county has been put to in the trial of murder cases since the first day of May, last year. And this expense will continue so long as the murderers are set free and patted on the back. There is a commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," and in nine cases out of ten there is a way of avoiding the killing of a fellow being. Those killings that could have been avoided are the ones that should be condemned. There hasn't been a self defense plea borne out in a murder trial in Dade county in a long time. When will this life taking campaign cease.—Miami Metropolis.

Catch Him at Any Cost.

The killing of Sheriff Langston, of Leon county by a mean and vicious negro whom he had a warrant for and attempted to arrest, was a cruel and cowardly one. The negro who did the killing made good his escape, and up to

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now has not been apprehended. A large reward should at once be offered, and every citizen should do his best to capture the red-handed assassin. Langston was a good man and a fearless officer. The murderer should be apprehended at all hazards even if a reward of \$10,000 is necessary raised by private subscription. He should be made an example of. This killing of officers in the discharge of their duties should be stopped. It is anarchy pure and simple.—Inverness Chronicle.

In Maj. Butler's Bailiwick.

The Masons of Inverness propose to build a large three-story brick and cement building. The first floor will be used as the Chronicle's office, and second floor for offices and the third a Masonic temple. Inverness is growing and the way the Chronicle is spreading out is marvelous. The editor of the Chronicle is so busy with the duties of clerk of the court he had no time to edit his paper and has imported G. S. McAfee, of Kentucky, who arrived before the holidays and has proved a cracker-jack editorial writer, while Major Butler, than whom there is no better local editor and news gatherer in the state, is building him an up-to-date bungalow in the suburbs of the town. Sure there is thrift and growing prosperity to all who are allied with the Chronicle.—Ocala Star.

Take It Out of Politics.

Some of the papers are clamoring for the removal of Dr. Sledd, as president of the state university, claiming that he has made a failure of it. It is our opinion that the university was a failure long before Dr. Sledd took hold of it, and the contemplated change will not benefit it unless his successor is given the proper encouragement and help, instead of "knocks." But the University of Florida must be taken out of politics before it will ever

amount to anything. Dr. Sledd's "failure to make good," as one paper puts it, is not due to incompetence, but to prejudice against him. Now, think of it! What assurance have we that the efforts of his successor will not be nullified by some such prejudice also. Instead of being a credit to the state, the University of Florida is a bone of contention for politicians and the seat of petty quarrels, prejudices and jealousies. Other states can maintain great universities, and why can't Florida?—DeLand Record.

Church Papers Should Be Friendly.

With this issue the Florida Baptist Witness changes its place of publication from Arcadia to Jacksonville. Its size and general appearance is somewhat like the Advocate. The Witness is the official organ of the Florida Baptists, a very strong and aggressive body of Christian people. It seems to us that the Witness and the Advocate now being issued from the same office ought to be able to do a wonderful work for the Lord. The Christian people of the State have long wanted a means of furthering the moral and religious movements and reforms which Florida so much needs. This is their opportunity, for the Witness and the Advocate to "cover Florida like the dew."

There will be no communion in which either one or both will not be reached through the medium of the champions of righteousness and movement that looks to the uplift of the race. We pray that the other Bros. Edwards and Brittain, may be the presence and comfort of the Spirit in their work, and we trust that they may make the Witness increasingly helpful to their constituency. We hope the people will rally to their support, both with money and cooperation otherwise.—Florida Christian Advocate



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